

**Borough Councillor's Update – January 2015**  
**Contact your Borough Councillor Alison Foster by telephone on  
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**Local Broadband Update**

I am pleased to report that the green broadband box on The Green is now active and serves the part of the village between The Green and the High Street going toward Lavendon, this also benefits Orchard Lane, Brook Lane and Wood Road. The remaining two boxes in Harrold will be installed and powered in January and go live in February. They will serve the remainder of Harrold, Carlton and Little Odell.

**A message from PCSO Daniel James:**

There have been a number of frauds in Bedfordshire recently. The scam involves a fraudster calling elderly victims, telling them that he/she is a police officer and, that their bank cards have been compromised. Victims are encouraged to call their banks and cancel their cards. But the fraudsters leave the telephone line open and pretend to be the victim's bank. They then persuade the victim to divulge their PIN, bank details and other personal information. They then send a courier to pick up the 'compromised cards' for 'forensic testing'. The cards are then used by the fraudsters to withdraw as much money as possible.

Please note:

- Police officers and banks NEVER ask for PIN's
- Police officers NEVER send couriers

Pass this message to anyone that may be vulnerable to this kind of fraud.

**Winter**

As winter is now upon us this is just a quick reminder to residents of some of the agencies able to help the elderly or vulnerable in the rural area. If you know of anyone that could benefit from these services please ask them to get in touch either with the organisation concerned directly or with me and I will put them in touch.

**Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)**

The charity provides a range of services including the 'Village Agent' service to the elderly and vulnerable. They cover all rural parts of Bedford Borough with their friendly and trained Village Agents able to visit residents at home or talk to residents by phone. They can offer advice about keeping warm & healthy, help with home adaptations to help keep your independence and advise about community transport & other community services benefits & allowances, such as Pension Credit & Attendance Allowance and help fill in forms. It is a free service - all you need to do is call your Village Agent. All Agents are DBS (CRB) checked and operate in the strictest confidence. Lydia Wright is the Village Agent for Wymington, Podington Hinwick and Farndish. Contact Lydia on Freephone 0800 039 1234 leave a message and she will call you back.

**Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust - The Bobby Scheme**

The Trust was launched in 1997 and is a registered charity. Their aim is to support any community based initiative which has the potential to improve the "quality of life" of local communities or individuals, such as crime prevention, road safety and the safety of the individual. They operate "Bobby Scheme" a free home security service. This scheme is a free service which helps elderly or vulnerable residents by giving support and practical help in improving their home security with the aim of preventing crime. The "Bobbymen" are trained carpenters, lock fitters and crime prevention

advisers. They assess each case individually and fit whatever security devices are necessary to improve the home's security absolutely free of charge.

### **AgeUK Bedfordshire**

Age UK is a charity that offers a range of services to all those over 50. This includes a free confidential information and advice service on a wide range of topics including welfare benefits, housing advice and help with consumer and health issues. The charity also has home help, handyperson and gardening services. They also provide an accompanied outings service and companion visits. All those working within these services for Age UK are DBS (CRB) checked.

### **Borough News**

#### **NHS Update**

You may have seen in the local and indeed national media that Accident & Emergency departments have seen unprecedented demand over the Christmas period and into January. Bedford Hospital has reported that admissions were up during this period by 20% in comparison with 2013.

The Hospital has subsequently asked residents to consider whether they could receive treatment elsewhere to avoid unnecessary trips to A & E. Potential alternatives for treatment include GP surgeries, pharmacies or the Putnoe Walk-In Centre.

The Hospital has responded to the strain on its services by working with social care providers (including the Borough Council), GPs, community health groups and the ambulance service to prevent hospital admissions where possible and to ensure patients are discharged safely.

In other news, the body responsible for organising local healthcare services has reported significant financial issues for the current year. At a meeting at the beginning of January, the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) reported that in a worst case scenario its spending deficit for 2014/15 could be as high as £36m. I will continue to monitor this situation and any subsequent effect on services.

#### **Black Cat Roundabout**

The works to enlarge the Black Cat roundabout and install new lanes and traffic signals are continuing and are set to finish in early 2015.

The Government recently announced plans to invest £1.5bn in the East of England's road network. One of the schemes listed is to dual the A428 from the Black Cat roundabout to Caxton Gibbet, west of Cambridge. This means there will be a dualled road linking the M1 to Cambridge.

#### **Pothole Funding**

The Government has announced that it is to provide Bedford Borough Council with £15.5m to repair potholes. The funding will be available from 2015/16 and will cover the period to 2020/21. Just under £3m will be provided next year.

#### **Winter Updates**

As a reminder, the Council provides updates on its website showing changes to transport arrangements and waste collections as a result of the winter weather. It also has a tracking map showing the location of gritting vehicles. The page is particularly useful for those anticipating changes to public, school and adult services transport arising from poor weather conditions. You can access the updates by visiting <http://apps.bedford.gov.uk/winterupdates/>